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INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification 6: A61F 13/56, 13/15	A1	(11) International Publication Number: WO 95/29657 (43) International Publication Date: 9 November 1995 (09.11.95)
(21) International Application Number: PCT/US95/05354 (22) International Filing Date: 28 April 1995 (28.04.95) (30) Priority Data: 08/236,594 29 April 1994 (29.04.94) US 08/368,200 4 January 1995 (04.01.95) US (71) Applicant: THE PROCTER & GAMBLE COMPANY [US/US]; One Procter & Gamble Plaza, Cincinnati, OH 45202 (US). (72) Inventor: RONN, Karl, Patrick; Avenida A-C, Quinta El Moro, Urbanizacion Caurimare, Caracas 1010 A (VE). (74) Agents: REED, T., David et al.; The Procter & Gamble Company, 5299 Spring Grove Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45217 (US).		(81) Designated States: AM, AU, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CN, CZ, EE, FI, GE, HU, JP, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LK, LR, LT, LV, MD, MG, MN, MX, NO, NZ, PL, RO, RU, SG, SI, SK, TJ, TT, UA, UZ, VN, European patent (AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, ES, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG), ARIPO patent (KE, MW, SD, SZ, UG). Published <i>With international search report.</i> <i>Before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of the receipt of amendments.</i>
(54) Title: CLOSURE SYSTEM FOR DISPOSABLE PULL-ON PANTS HAVING A STRETCHABLE WAISTBAND		
(57) Abstract <p>An elasticized, disposable, absorbent pant (20) for use by an incontinent adult or for use by a toddler or small child, during body function control training, is disclosed with an advantageous fastener arrangement (16) which ensures that the pant remains in the normal wearing position and does not have a tendency to slide down off the hips of the wearer or gap at the waist leading to leaks following any additional loading which occurs whenever the wearer either eliminates or urinates. The fastener (16) is arranged to extend generally between the front and back panels of the disposable, absorbent, elasticized pant and to increase the forces exerted by the pant onto the wearer by effectively adjusting the waistband size to more closely conform to the waist size of the wearer. The fasteners may be adhesive, a snap engagement fastener, a hook and perforation fastener, or a hook and loop pile fastener, or post and grommet; all of aforementioned fasteners are easily engaged and easily disengaged to permit the wearer both to put on and to easily remove the garment whenever the need arises.</p>		

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CLOSURE SYSTEM FOR DISPOSABLE PULL-ON PANTS
HAVING A STRETCHABLE WAISTBAND

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to pull-on, stretchable waistband, disposable pants and more specifically to disposable pants having a stretchable waistband and a closure system, such as fasteners, to ensure that the pants snugly fit the wearer and to further ensure that the pants do not gap or leak at the waist.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Disposable undergarments have been designed to address the needs of toddlers and young children for pull-up training pants. Additionally, larger versions of such disposable undergarments may be fabricated for use by older individuals with incontinence. Present incontinence products for adults typically are an absorbent member or pad designed to be worn in the crotch and held in position by means of straps or fasteners extending from the back of the article around the wearer to the front panel and attached at points near the end of the absorbent pad. The product essentially is a diaper which relies exclusively on the attachment straps for application and retention.

Whether they be toddlers or adults, the wearers have varying waistlines; as a result, a significant number of different sizes of garments to accommodate all individuals would be required. It is desirable to offer limited numbers of sizes in the product line from a production and inventory viewpoint while at the same time being able to accommodate a broad spectrum of waist sizes for the consumer.

For those wearers whose waist is slightly smaller than the optimum waistline for the pant, the pants could have a tendency to slip off the wearer or gap at the waist leading to leaks, particularly when the garment is loaded with urine or other body excrement. The pant garment may have sufficient extendibility in its elasticized sections to permit the easy application of the pants to the wearer. But whenever the wearer's hips are insufficiently defined relative to the waist, as with toddlers and small children, this easy application to the wearer also may mean there could be insufficient

forces generated between the hips of the wearer and the absorbent pant garment to retain the garment in the usual wearing position without gaps that can lead to leaks.

With regard to adult garments of a similar type for use by incontinent individuals, the definition between the waist and hips of an older adult in some cases is insufficient to provide good retention of the pant garment when using only the elastic forces within the side panels and the elastic forces of the waistband of the disposable, absorbent pant.

Incontinent adults often resist the use of diapers as demeaning and may be more comfortable using a pant-type garment. In addition to absorbency and disposability in products for incontinent adults, the requirements for such a pant-type structure include also comfort, reliability and dignity; additionally, toddlers or children engaged in toilet training need such a pant-type structure for practice to positively reinforce their training.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is an object of the invention to anchor pull-on pants of the disposable, absorbent type to the wearer while at the same time to retain the advantages of the pull-on type garment.

It is another object of the invention to increase and supplement the elastic forces necessary to anchor a pull-on stretchable disposable pant product on the wearer.

A still further object of the invention is to effectively adjust or reduce the waist size of a pull-on, elasticized, disposable, absorbent pant whenever the waist dimensions of the pant are slightly too large for the wearer's hips and waist, or when the pant gaps at the waist.

An absorbent, disposable pant-type product as in U.S. Patent 5,246,433, issued to Hasse, et al., and commonly assigned herewith, is known and used as a training pant for toddlers and young children. As part of the body function control training for toddlers, it is desirable to provide a garment of the same general type as the youngster will be expected to wear after being fully trained. Part of this training includes learning how to and when to remove the garment in order to use the toilet. This requires that the toddlers or young children be provided with a garment which

will slip on and off over the hips to permit ease of removal. Further, should the garment not be soiled, the garment then might be reused by pulling the garment up over the hips for continued wear.

Training pant-type garments are designed with stretchable or elasticized waistbands and side panels in order to permit the extension of the garment to a larger size whenever the garment is pulled over the hips of the wearer. The forces required to stretch the garment adequately must not be excessively large or the individual may not be able to adequately remove the garment at the appropriate time and thereby losing the positive reinforcement of success and to replace the garment in the proper position. Lower elastic forces may be desirable in order to maximize the ease of application, removal or general wearing comfort. Therefore, the extension forces must be controlled and in some cases may be insufficient to retain the garment in the normal wearing position.

Accordingly, it is desirable to supplement the elastic waistband and side panel retention forces by addition of fasteners which will ensure that adequate forces are exerted between the wearer and the garment to retain the garment in the normal wearing position. The fasteners typically are formed as a strap or strip of material which may be mounted or attached on either the back or front panel of the pant-type garment. The fasteners may be anchored firmly to the garment and may be held in a retracted or stored position, such as folded, ready for use. Alternatively, the fasteners may be pre-fastened in the front of the garment and need only to be released prior to the garment being put on the wearer. After the garment has been placed on the wearer, the fastener may be pulled across the side panels and engaged with the front panel in a designated engagement or landing zone. As a further alternative, the fasteners may be extended to overlap and attach to each other where one fastener acts as a landing zone for the other. The fastener may be pulled sufficiently tight and the side panels of the garment gathered manually, if necessary, to ensure that the waist size of the pant is adequately reduced to prevent the pant from slipping inadvertently over the hips of the wearer and to reduce the likelihood of gapping at the waist that can lead to leaks.

The fastener may be one of several different types. The fastener preferably may be either an adhesive or a mechanical fastener. Further, the fastener may be a non-elastic strip or strap, or may be an extensible elastic strip.

For adhesive fasteners, the adhesive may be chosen from known adhesives to

provide either a highly adherent force for firm attachment or a moderate tack adhesive for easier release of the adhesive from the material of the landing zone, thereby permitting re-use of the garment and the re-adherence of the fastener to the landing zone.

The fastener alternatively may be a mechanical fastener such as a hook/loop fastener similar to VELCRO brand fasteners, snaps, or a hook/perforation type fastener.

Either the mechanical fastener or the adhesive fastener may be retained in a Z-fold, and then unfolded to extend the fastener across the stretch panel at the sides of the garment for engagement with the front panel. For adhesive fasteners, the adhesive surface may be engaged with and protected by face-to-face engagement with a release surface on the Z-fold fastener. Thus, the adhesive may be removed from the release surface but yet retain adequate adhesion to the outer layer of the garment whenever engaged with the landing zone.

To retain the mechanical fasteners in the Z-fold unused position, a small spot or region of adhesive is applied between adjacent segments of the strip of the mechanical fastener. This application of adhesive will serve to retain the fastener in its folded and unused position until such time as the fastener is to be unfolded, extended and engaged with the front panel of the absorbent garment.

While the preceding summary has primarily focused upon and is particularly relevant to training pants for toddlers, the same principles and the same embodiments may be used on larger size garments for those older individuals with incontinence. Regardless of the intended wearer, the pants may incorporate an elastic or stretchable member disposed to partially encircle the waist of the wearer. Whenever the fasteners are extended and pulled toward the front panel of the garment, the elastic member partially surrounding the waist thus will be extended and will offer resistance to the pulling of the fastener toward its landing zone. As the elastic or extendable portion of the garment is stretched by pulling the fastener toward its landing zone, the forces resisting such pulling will increase and thus will provide the forces necessary to more firmly anchor the garment on the wearer. The amount of extension may be varied to control the forces generated by the use of the fasteners. Particularly in the adult incontinence garment, a substantial anchoring force exerted by the fasteners around the waist of the wearer will give the wearer a tactile reassurance that the garment is in its proper place and additional reassurance that the

garment will be more firmly retained in the appropriate wearing position. Such confidence is very important to maintaining the dignity of an individual with incontinence.

A better understanding of the invention may be had from the accompanying drawings and the detailed description to follow.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a right rear elevated perspective view of an absorbent, disposable pull-on training pant incorporating the invention.

FIG. 2 is an illustration of the chassis of a pull-on, absorbent, garment prior to the joining of the elasticized ears that form a side panel and the figure details placement of the fasteners relative to the chassis.

FIG. 3 illustrates the pull-on pants in a partial top view with the fastener in a folded condition prior to use.

FIG. 4 illustrates a fastener in extended condition prior to engagement with the front panel.

FIG. 5 illustrates a fastener extended and engaged with the landing zone of the garment.

FIG. 6 illustrates the disposable, absorbent pant garment shown in partial segments with a column/hook fastener and a perforated outer layer landing zone of the pants for engagement with the column/hook fastener.

FIG. 7 illustrates in segmented form a disposable pull-on absorbent garment with a fastener incorporating hook/loop attachment portions.

FIG. 8 illustrates the absorbent pant in partial segments with a pressure engageable snap.

FIG. 9 is an elevated front view of the absorbent pant with a fastener disposed on straps to engage and attach to each other on the front of the pant.

FIG. 10 is a perspective view of an alternative embodiment of the present

invention in a flat-out configuration prior to joining the elasticized ears; the outer layer of the absorbent article facing the viewer.

FIG. 11 is a left front elevated perspective view of the absorbent article in FIG. 10.

FIG. 12 is a left front elevated perspective view of an alternative embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Referring initially to FIG. 1, a pull-on, disposable, absorbent pant-type garment 20 is illustrated having a front panel 56, a crotch panel 57 and a back panel 58. This type garment 20 is more fully and completely described in U.S. Patent 5,246,433 issued to Hasse, et al., September 21, 1993, and assigned to The Procter and Gamble Company, Cincinnati, Ohio. U.S. Patent 5,246,433 is hereby incorporated by reference to provide disclosure of the garment and the method of garment manufacture.

This garment may be made in a plurality of different sizes and may be sold for uses including body function control training for toddlers as well as for use by incontinent adults.

Elasticized flaps 30 preferably extend respectively from front panel 56 and back panel 58. Any convenient and appropriate technique such as gluing, ultrasonic bonding, heat welding or adhesive attachment, may be utilized to form seam 10 to complete the pant-type garment 20 as illustrated. Incorporated into the waistband region 34 near the waist opening 19 are elastic waistband members 76. The elastic members 76 preferably are confined between the inner layer 46 and the outer layer 48 of the garment 20. The inner layer and outer layer 46, 48, respectively, form the chassis 14 of the pant 20. Similarly, elastic panels 90 may be disposed between the inner layer 46 and outer layer 48 in the regions of the elasticized flaps 30 to provide the elastic stretchability aspect. Alternatively, the elastic panels may be exposed and not be contained between layers 46, 48.

Fastener 16 is disposed, preferably, on the back panel 58 of pant 20 and overlying at least a portion of the surface of the pant 20 in the waistband region 34. The waistband region 34 is that region of the outer layer 48 overlying elastic members 76, and proximate to the edge 18 of the pant 20 at the waist opening 19.

Fastener 16, comprising a strap 15 as later shown in FIG 4, may be disposed on the front panel 56 of the pant 20, if desired, but it is generally preferred that the fastener 16 be anchored to the back panel 48 so that the fastener 16 may be extended forward and readily attached to the front panel 56 by the wearer or the person giving assistance to the wearer.

Referring now to FIG. 2, the construction of the chassis 14 is more readily apparent. Chassis 14 comprises liquid impervious outer layer 48, absorbent pad 24, elastic panels 90 and elastic members 76. The elastic panels 90 and elastic members 76 together with absorbent pad 24 may be trapped between the impervious outer layer 48 and a pervious inner layer 46, as is more thoroughly described in U.S. Patent 5,246,433. The chassis 14 supports fasteners 16 which are disposed generally overlying one of the elastic members 76. Elastic panels 90 may be exposed and be joined at their edges to the flap 30 or to the edges of panels 90. The essential aspect of elastic panels, such as 90, is to provide expandability to the waist of the pant 20.

The chassis 14 then may be folded and the elasticized ears 30 may be joined together using adhesive, glue, heat or ultrasonic bonding forming side panels 31. Other conventional joining techniques may be equally advantageous.

Reference is now made to FIG. 3, which illustrates pant 20 of the nature described in FIGS. 1 and 2 showing the attachment of one of the fasteners 16. Fastener 16 is preferably comprised of three segments, 21, 22 and 23. Segment 21 is preferably anchored to the back panel 58 of the pant 20. Segment 21 may be anchored to the back panel 58 of pant 20 by a high-strength adhesive, thermal bonding, ultrasonic bonding or any other desired technique which ensures attachment. Further, the fasteners 16 may be releasably attached to the pant 20 such that the fasteners 16 can be completely removed if the user desires. The technique of adhesive attachment lends itself to manufacturability, serviceability and durability during use. (It is conceivable that the fasteners 16 could remain unattached to the pant 20 until the user attaches the fasteners to the pant 20.)

Segment 22 is folded back over segment 21 and may be retained in that position by a small region of adhesive 25. The adhesive 25 may be a low-tack adhesive merely sufficient to hold segment 22 in the folded-back position overlying segment 21.

Segment 23 of fastener 16 may be adhesively retained either by adhesive 25 on the surface 27 of segment 23 or a small quantity of adhesive 25 restricted to a

small region of surface 27 merely used to tack and hold the segment 23 to segment 22.

In FIG. 3, with the segment 23 and particularly surface 27 coated with an adhesive, the fastener 16 may be unfolded and extended past seam 10 to a position where the surface 27 of segment 23, carrying an adhesive layer 35, may be then engaged with front panel 56, by pulling segment 23 and its adhesive coating 35 from segment 22. The fastener 16 may be pulled to extend the elastic member 76, as illustrated in FIGS. 1 and 2, creating forces to effectively reduce the waistband 34 circumference of the pant 20. The waistband 34 circumference is effectively reduced since the side panels 31 and elastic ears 30 are gathered or folded when the fastener 16 is pulled and engaged with front panel 36.

FIG. 4 illustrates the fastener 16 with segment 21 firmly attached to the back panel 58 of pant 20, intermediate segment 22 extended, and segment 23 illustrated as being positioned for engagement with the front panel 56 of pant 20.

FIG. 5 is a further illustration of fastener 16 in its fully extended and engaged condition whereby segment 22 extends across the elasticized ears 30 and side panels 31, and segment 23 adhesively engages the outer layer 48 in the general region of the elastic member 76. Accordingly, the region of engagement forms a landing zone 33 for segment 23 of fastener 16 by pulling the fastener 16 snug and engaging the outer layer 48 of pant 20 at landing zone 33 in the region of elastic member 76 and releasing the fastener 16; the restorative action of member 76 will have the effect to reduce the circumference of the waist opening 19 of the pant 20 to more closely conform to the waist of the wearer.

Referring now to FIG. 6, the disposable pant 20 is illustrated in segmented form with an alternative embodiment of fastener 16. Segments 21 and 22 are as previously described, with respect to FIGS. 3, 4 and 5, while segment 23 carries on one surface 27 thereof a plurality of hook members 28. The hook members 28 may be deposited and formed onto segment 23 in accord with the teachings with U.S. Patents 5,116,563 entitled PROCESS FOR PRODUCING A MECHANICAL FASTENER, issued to Dennis A. Thomas, et al., on May 26, 1992; U.S. Patent 5,180,534 entitled PROCESS OF MANUFACTURING A REFASTENABLE MECHANICAL FASTENING SYSTEM, issued to Thomas, et al. on January 19, 1993; and U.S. Patent 5,230,851 entitled PROCESS OF MANUFACTURING A REFASTENABLE FASTENING SYSTEM, issued to Thomas on July 27, 1993.

Each of these patents are hereby incorporated by reference herein..

The hook members 28 may engage with and penetrate the perforations 29 which are formed through at least a portion of the front panel 56 forming a landing zone 33 of pant 20 and specifically through the outer layer 48. As fastener 16 is released after engaging hooks 28 into perforations 29, the contracting of elastic forces of elastic member 76, as previously illustrated in FIGS. 1, 2, will attempt to pull hooks 28 from perforations 29. The hooks 28 having been engaged with the outer layer 48 will retain hooks 28 and segment 23 in the position generally overlying elastic member 76, as previously described with respect to FIGS. 1 and 2. One skilled in the art will recognize that the mating portions of the fastener, hooks 28 and perforation 29, may be reversed in location.

Another alternative embodiment of the fastener is illustrated and described with respect to FIG. 7, to which we refer at this point.

Fastener 16 in FIG. 7 is substantially identical to the fastener 16 in FIG. 6. Segment 23 of the fastener 16 comprises a plurality of hook members 28 on one surface 27 thereof.

The front panel 56 of the pant 20, specifically outer layer 48, supports a backing sheet 36 and a loop pile 37. (However, the outer layer 48 of the pant 20 may be formed from a material that comprises the loop pile 37.) As used herein, the term "loop pile" refers to any loop type fastening element capable of engaging a complementary hook component. Some non-limiting examples of loops suitable for use with the present invention include loops formed by knitting loops into a backing; by pleating or corrugating fibers; or those described in allowed application Serial Number 07/703,441, filed by David Goulait on May 20, 1991, and U.S. Patent 5,032,122, entitled LOOP FASTENING MATERIAL FOR FASTENING DEVICE AND METHOD OF MAKING SAME, issued to Noel et al. on July 16, 1991, which is herein incorporated by reference. (It should also be noted that the loop pile 37 can be replaced with hook members 28, such that the fastener 16 is closed by engaging the hook members 28 with complementary hooks positioned where the loop pile 37 is located.)

Backing sheet 36 is preferably glued or adhesively attached to the outer layer 48 in the desired location, which is substantially the same location as that described for perforations 29, and backing sheet 36 supports the loop pile 37. The loop pile 37 then is engaged by the hooks 28 when the fastener 16 is extended and pulled forward

to tighten the waist of pant 20 and pressed into engagement with the loop pile 37. After the pant 20 is applied to the wearer and fastener 16 extended to engage hooks 28 with loop pile 37 and thereafter it is desired to remove the pant 20, the hooks 28 may be disengaged from the loop pile 37 by lifting and pulling segment 23, which in turn will relieve the forces exerted by the fastener 16 onto the pant 20, and will permit the pant 20 to be slid over the hips of the wearer and removed. Should the pant 20 remain unsoiled, it may again be put onto the wearer, the fastener 16 again extended, and hooks 28 engaged with the loop pile 37 to increase the forces exerted onto the wearer necessary to hold the pant 20 in place. The fastener may be either a stretchable or non-elastic strap.

A still further embodiment of fastener 16 which may be incorporated with the pant 20 is illustrated in fragmentary representation in FIG. 8.

Fragments of back panel 58 and front panel 56 of the pant 20, as illustrated in FIG. 1, are shown with the segment 21 firmly attached to back panel 58. Segment 22 of the fastener and segment 23 are partially extended. Segment 23 has formed thereon a part of a snap fastener which is comprised of a post 73 and grommet 70 fastener. In the illustrated embodiment of FIG. 8, the grommets 70 may be attached by adhesive, glue, or by heat bonding to segment 23. The grommets 70 preferably would be a plastic ring having a central opening 72. The grommet 70 may engage a second element of the fastener 16 which is presented in the form of a post 73 supported on a reinforcing disk 74. Post 73 is provided with a bulbous head 75 of controlled diameter. The head 75 of post 73 may be positioned into central opening 72 of grommet 70, and then grommet 70 and head 75 may be forced toward each other until head 75 is forced through the central opening 72.

The yielding nature of plastic is advantageously used to form the grommet 70, the post 73, head 75 and support disk 74. To remove the fastener 16 from engagement with front panel 56, segment 23 of fastener 16 may be pulled generally outward to remove head 75 from the central opening 72 of grommet 70, thereby disconnecting the grommet 70 from the front panel 56 of a disposable pant 20.

In order to accommodate various waist sizes of wearers, segment 23 may be provided with a plurality of grommets 70 while front panel 56 may be provided with a plurality of the post 73 and head 75 portions of the fastener 16. In addition to being able to engage any one of the grommets 70 with any one of the heads 75 and posts 73, the spacing between grommets 70 and the spacing between posts 73 may

be varied thereby providing a wide variation of waistlines which may be accommodated by the fastener 16. Also, the grommets 70 and posts 73 may be formed on separate fastener straps 13 and thus engageable. The fastener straps 13 will effectively reduce the waistband 34 size of the pant 20 without forming the grommets, or posts 73 on the front panel 56 of the pant 20.

By controlling the number of grommets 70 and the number of posts 73, the quantity of combinations of engaging locations may yield a significant number of variable waist sizes that may be accommodated by fastener 16. For example, for each fastener 16 having three grommets 70 and three posts 73, nine possible positional combinations are achievable. With two such fasteners 16, one on each side of the pant 20 as illustrated in FIG. 1, it is possible to create eighty-one different waist sizes over a relatively broad spectrum. Accordingly, a garment which may be slightly too large for a particular wearer may be adjusted to accommodate that wearer with waist size variations comparable to the large number of positions possible with either an adhesive fastener as illustrated and discussed with respect to FIG. 1, a hook 28/perforation 29 fastener 16 illustrated and discussed with reference to FIG. 6, or the hook 29/loop pile 37 fastener 16 of FIG. 7.

While the invention has been described generally with the attaching segment 21 of fastener 16 affixed to the back panel 58 of the pant 20, it should be understood that the fastener 16 may be also attached in a similar manner to the front panel 56. Front panel 56 attachment requires a landing zone 33 of perforations 29, loop pile 37, posts 73 or heads 75, or an open adhesively engageable area 33 for the adhesive fasteners to engage and adhere to the outer layer 48 of back panel 58. Additionally, it should be understood that the perforations 29 illustrated in FIG. 6, which extend through outer layer 48, may be formed into segment 23 of the fastener 16 and the hooks 28 may be positioned on outer layer 48 or on the other fastener 16 with equal efficacy. Similarly, hooks 28 and the backing sheet 36 with loop pile 37 may be interchanged from the position illustrated in FIG. 7 if desired or substituted for the posts 73 and grommets 70 of FIG. 9. The grommets 70 and the posts 73 and heads 75 similarly may be interchanged in position from that illustrated in FIG. 8 without losing efficacy.

In any of the embodiments of the fastener 13, 16 illustrated in any of the drawings, the purpose is to allow the fastener 13, 16 to be pulled snug and to effectively reduce the waist opening 19 size of a elasticized disposable pant 20, thereby permitting the pant 20 to be applied to the wearer by pulling the pant 20 up

over the hips and into the normal wearing position and then supplementing the elastic forces of the elastic pant 20 to further ensure that the pant 20 remains in the normal wearing position until such time as the pant 20 is removed from the wearer. While several embodiments of the fastener 16 have been illustrated as applied to the disposable, absorbent, elasticized pant 20, it should be understood that further minor variations in the type of fastener 16, the positioning of the fastener 16 relative to the front panels 56 and back panels 58 of pant 20, and the techniques for attaching the fastener 16 to the pant 20, may be made, as well as which portion of a fastener is disposed and which portion of pant may be varied or reversed, without departing from the scope of the invention.

One preferred alternative embodiment of the present invention is shown in Figures 10 and 11. As shown in FIGS. 10 and 11, the pant 20 has a longitudinal centerline 100 which generally bisects the pant 20 into right and left halves when the pant is being worn. The pant also has a lateral centerline 102 which generally bisects the pant 20 into front and rear halves when the pant 20 is being worn.

The pant 20 comprises a chassis 14 having a front panel 56, a rear panel 58, a crotch panel 57 intermediate the front panel 56 and the rear panel 58, and a pair of longitudinal edges 150. The front panel 56 and the rear panel 58 each have a waist edge 104 preferably forming at least a portion of the pant's waist hoop 110 when the pant 20 is fitted to a wearer.

The front panel 56 preferably comprises a pair of opposed first side panel flaps 112. The first side panel flaps 112 are preferably elasticized or elastically extensible and extend laterally outwardly from opposite sides of the front panel 56 of the chassis. (The term "elastically extensible" refers to materials that extend in at least one direction when a force is applied and return to approximately their original dimensions after the force is removed. The term "laterally outwardly" is used herein to denote the direction generally away from the longitudinal centerline 100 of the pant 20.) The back panel 58 preferably comprises a pair of opposed second side panel flaps 114. The second side panel flaps 114 are preferably elastically extensible and extend laterally outwardly from opposite sides of the back panel 58 of the chassis 14.

The first side panel flaps 112 and the second side panel flaps 114 each have a proximal edge 116 and a distal edge 118 disposed laterally outboard of the proximal edge 116. Further, each of the first side panel flaps 112 and second side panel flaps

114 have a first end edge 120 and a second end edge 122. The second end edge 122 is preferably disposed longitudinally inboard of the first end edge 120. (As used herein, the term "longitudinally inboard" refers to the direction toward the lateral centerline 102 of the pant 20.)

In a preferred embodiment, the distal edges 118 of one of the first side panel flaps 112 is joined with the distal edges 118 of one of the second side panel flaps 114 and the distal edge 118 of the other first side panel flap 112 is joined to the distal edge 118 of the other second side panel flap 114 to form a pant 20. The distal edges 118 may be joined by any means as are known in the art. A more detailed discussion of how the first and second panel flaps may be joined can be found in U.S. Patent 5,246,433 issued to Hasse, et al., and commonly assigned herewith. (It should be noted that the language used herein describes the distal edges as being joined together. However, the language should not be construed to limit the scope of the invention to embodiments wherein only the distal ends are joined. In fact, it is contemplated that for ease of manufacture and for other purposes that portions of the members to be joined juxtaposed to the distal edge may be joined along with the distal edges or instead of the distal edges so long as the first and second panel flaps are joined together to form a pant.)

One unique feature of the alternative embodiment shown in FIGS. 10 and 11 is that at least one of the first side panel flaps 112 has a first end edge 120 that is disposed longitudinally inboard of the first end edge 120 of the second side panel flap 114 to which the first side panel flap 112 is joined. In this configuration, as can be seen in FIG. 11, the first end edge 120 of the first side panel flap 112 is disposed longitudinally inboard from the rest of the structure forming the waist hoop 110 of the pant 20 when the pant 20 is fitted to a wearer. The first end edge 120 of the first side panel flap 112 may be located anywhere longitudinally inboard of the first end edge 120 of the second side panel flap 114. (One especially preferred embodiment of the pant 20, as shown in FIG. 11, has the first end edge 120 of the first side panel flap 112 located between the top and bottom edges of the belt flap 125 which is described in more detail below.)

Another preferred embodiment of the present invention, as shown in FIG. 12, has a joined pair of side panel flaps 112 and 114 (one first side panel flap 112 joined with one second side panel flap 114) wherein the first end edges 120 of each of the individual side panels comprising the joined pair are disposed longitudinally inboard of the waist edge 104. In an especially preferred configuration of this embodiment,

the first end edges 120 of the side panel flaps 112 and 114 are located between the top and bottom edges of the belt flap 125.

The pant 20 preferably further comprises at least one belt flap 125 extending laterally outwardly from at least one of the first or second side panel flaps or at least one of the longitudinal edges 150 of the chassis 14. In one preferred embodiment, as shown in FIGS. 10 and 11, the belt flap 125 extends laterally outwardly from each of the second side panel flaps 114 juxtaposed to the first end edge 120. In another preferred embodiment, as shown in FIG. 12, the belt flap 125 extends laterally outwardly from the longitudinal edge 150 of the chassis 14 in the rear panel 58 of the pant 20. In any embodiment, the belt flap 125 has a top edge 127 and a bottom edge 129. The bottom edge 129 is preferably disposed longitudinally inboard of the top end edge 127. Further, the top end edge 127 preferably forms at least a portion of the waist hoop 110 of the pant 20 when the pant 20 is fitted to a wearer.

The belt flaps 125 may comprise any suitable material or materials that are known in the art. Further, the belt flaps 125 may be formed from portions of other elements of the pant such as the topsheet, the backsheet or the side panel flaps, or may be separate elements joined to the pant 20 by any known means for joining such materials. In a preferred embodiment, the belt flaps 125 are elasticized, or elastically extensible, so as to provide tension when used to reduce the effective size of the waist hoop 110.

The pant 20 preferably further comprises a fastening system for fastening the belt flaps 125 to another portion of the pant to effectively reduce the size of the waist hoop 110 of the pant. As shown in FIGS. 10 and 11, one preferred embodiment of the present invention comprises belt flaps 125 having first fastening members 130 joined thereto. The first fastening members 130 may comprise any fastening means as is known in the art, some of which are herein before described. One especially preferred fastening member 130 comprises the hooks of a hook and loop type fastener.

A second fastening member 132 is preferably disposed on the outer layer 48 of the pant 20 in at least the front panel 56. The second fastening member 132 should be engageable with the first fastening member 130. The second fastening member 132 may take on any size or shape and may comprise any fastening means as is known in the art. One especially preferred second fastening member 132 comprises the loop component of a hook and loop type fastener. Thus, as shown in

FIG. 11, when the pant is fitted to a wearer, the belt flap 125 may be wrapped around the waist of the wearer such that the first fastening member 130 joined to the belt flap 125 overlaps and engages the second fastening member 132. This configuration allows the diaperer to alter the effective size of the waist hoop 110 of the pant 20, thus allowing the pant to fit a wider range of wearer sizes. Further, the adjustable waist size allows for better fit and easy removal of the pant 20.

While particular embodiments of the present invention have been illustrated and described, it would be obvious to those skilled in the art that various changes and modifications can be made without departing from the spirit and the scope of the invention. It is therefore intended to cover in the following claims all such changes and modifications that are within the scope of the invention.

What is Claimed is:

1. A pull-up absorbent disposable pant comprising:
a chassis including a liquid impervious outer layer having an inner surface;
said chassis comprising a front panel, a back panel each disposed at opposite ends of said chassis and a crotch panel intermediate said front and back panels, said front and back panels comprising laterally extending side panel flaps;
an absorbent core disposed proximate said inner surface;
said side panel flaps each having lateral edges and said front and back panels and said side panel flaps having end edges;
said side panel flaps of said front panel and of said back panel joined together, forming side panels;
elastic members associated with said side panels, providing elasticity to said side panels;
elastic members associated with said front panel and said back panel and disposed proximate to said end edges forming an elastic waistband;
said absorbent disposable pant characterized by:
fasteners comprising an elongated layer disposed on and attached to at least one of said front and back panels and extendable to the other of said back and front panels, said fasteners engageable and attachable to effectively reduce the waistband size of said pant, wherein said fasteners are preferably disposed proximate to one of said end edges of said chassis.
2. The pant of claims 1 wherein said fastener is adhesively attachable to said other of said back or front panel.
3. The pant of claims 1 or 2 wherein said fastener is folded upon itself and adhesively retained in said folded condition prior to use.
4. The pant of claims 1 or 3 wherein said fastener comprises a plurality of hooks and a plurality of loops, a plurality of hooks engageable with another plurality of hooks or at least one grommet and at least one post, whereby said grommet may be forced over said post.
5. The pant of claim 4 wherein said at least one post is attached to said pant proximate to and adjacent to said end edge of one of said back or front panels.

6. The pant of claims 1 or 3 wherein said fastener further comprises a plurality of hooks disposed on one of said layers and a plurality of apertures defined by another one of said layers for engagement and retention by said hooks.
7. The pant of claim 6 wherein said plurality of apertures is disposed proximate one said end edge of said outer layer.
8. The pant of claims 1 or 3 wherein said fastening means comprises a plurality of grommets and a plurality of posts, one of said pluralities of grommets and posts disposed on a strap disposed on either said front or said back panel and said other of said pluralities of said grommets and posts disposed on the other of said front or back panel, said grommets engageable with and detachably retainable by said posts whereby said strap may be engaged with and attached to said other of said front and back panels;
said grommets disposed regularly spaced apart from the others of said grommets by a uniform distance and each of said posts of said plurality of posts are regularly spaced apart from the others of said posts by a uniform distance, said distance between said grommets and said distance between said posts being unequal.
9. The pant of any of the preceding claims wherein said fasteners are releasably attached to said front or back panels.
10. A pull-up disposable pant having a longitudinal centerline, a lateral centerline, and a waist hoop having a circumference, the pant comprising:
a chassis having a front panel, a back panel opposed to said front panel and a crotch panel intermediate said front and back panels, said front panel and said back panel each having a waist edge forming at least part of said waist hoop when the pant is fitted to a wearer;
said front panel comprising a pair of opposed first side panel flaps extending laterally outwardly from said chassis;
said back panel comprising a pair of opposed second side panel flaps extending laterally outwardly from said chassis;
said first and second side panel flaps each comprising a proximal edge, a distal edge disposed laterally outboard of said proximal edge, a first end edge and a

second end edge, said second end edge being disposed longitudinally inboard of said first end edge;

said distal edges of said first side panel flaps being joined with said distal edges of second side panel flaps to form two joined pairs of side panel flaps;

characterized in that at least one of said first side panel flap first end edges is disposed longitudinally inboard of said first edge of said second side panel flap to which said first side flap is joined; or, at least one of said first side panel flap first end edges is disposed longitudinally inboard of said waist edge; or, said first side panel flap first end edge and said second panel flap first end edge of at least one of said joined pairs of side panel flaps are both disposed longitudinally inboard of said waist edge;

a belt flap has a top edge and a bottom edge, said belt flap extending laterally outwardly from at least one of said first side panel flaps or said second side panel flaps juxtaposed said first end edge of said second side panel flap such that said top edge of said belt flap forms at least a portion of said waist hoop of the pant when the pant is fitted to said wearer, preferably wherein said belt flap extends laterally outwardly from said longitudinal edge of said chassis in said front panel or wherein said belt flap extends laterally outwardly from said longitudinal edge of said chassis in said back panel;

a first fastening member is disposed on and joined to said belt flap; and

a second fastening member is disposed on and joined to said front panel, said first fastening member being engageable with said second fastening member to effectively reduce said circumference of said waist hoop.

11. The pull-up disposable pant of Claim 10 wherein said first end edge of said first side panel flap is disposed longitudinally inboard of said top edge of said belt flap and longitudinally outboard of said bottom edge of said belt flap when the pant is fitted to a wearer.

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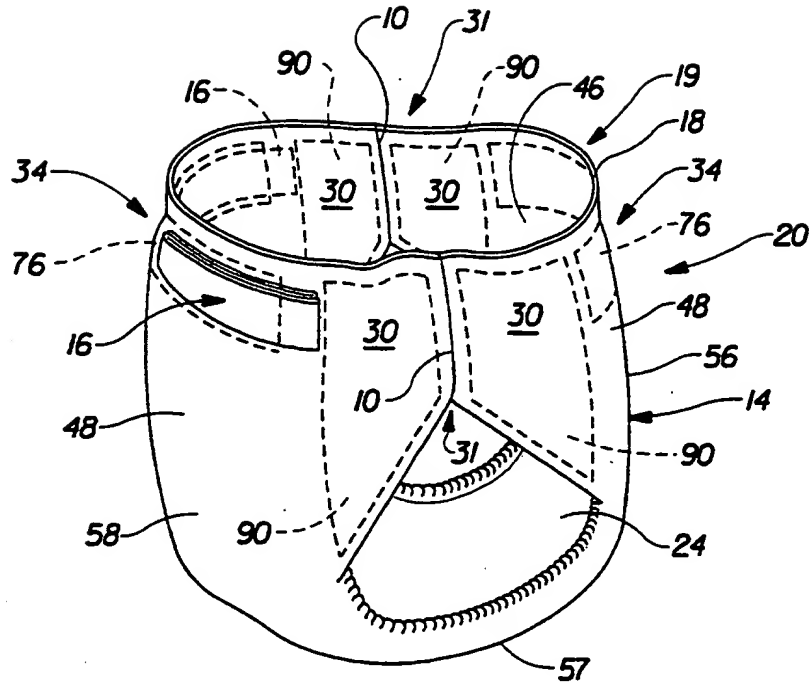


Fig. 1

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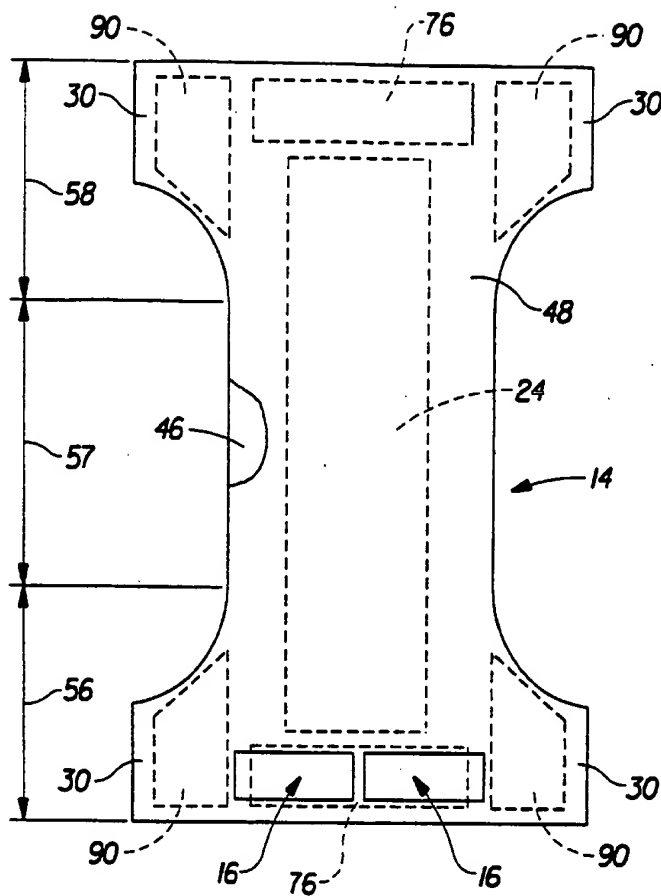


Fig. 2

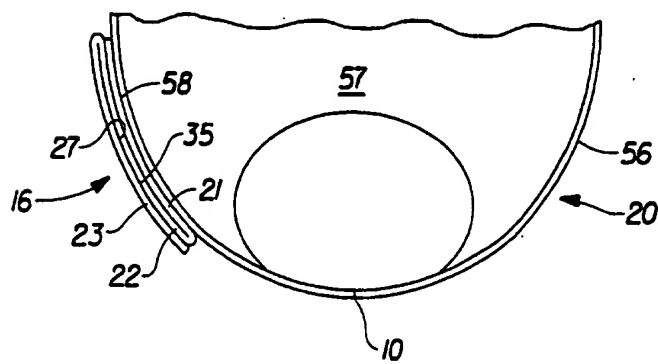


Fig. 3

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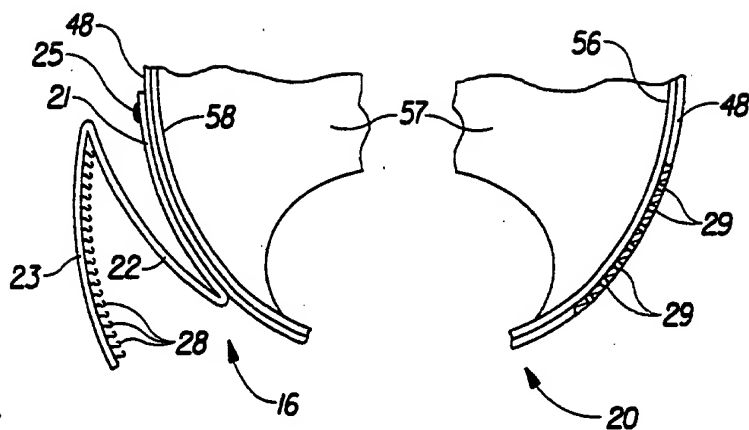


Fig. 6

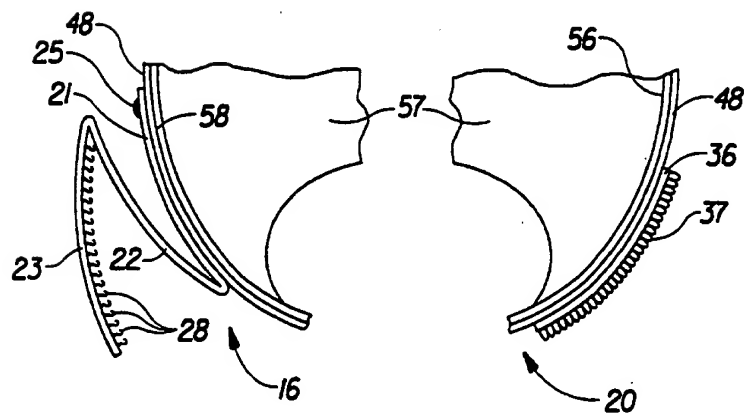


Fig. 7

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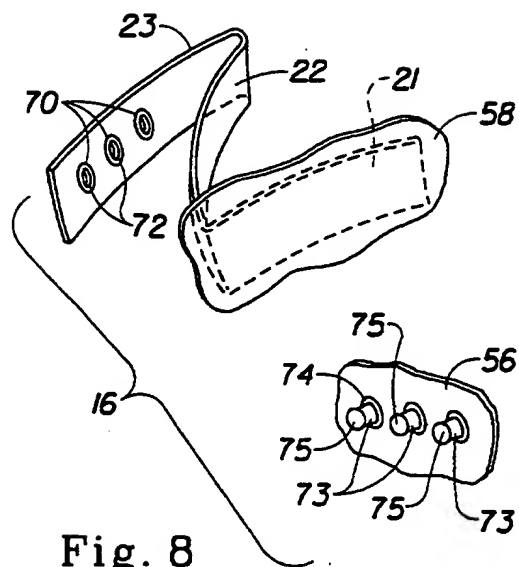


Fig. 8

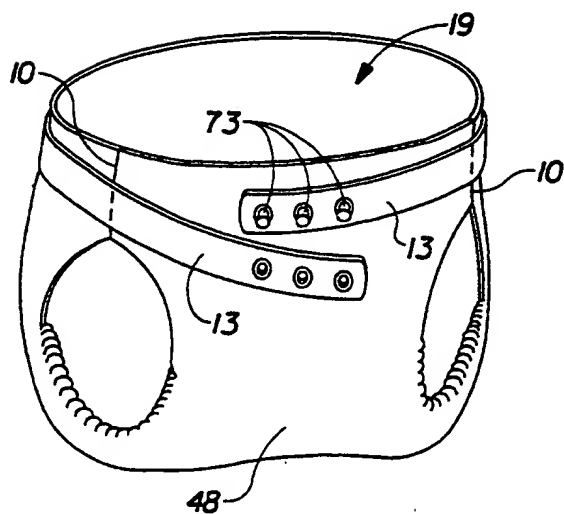


Fig. 9

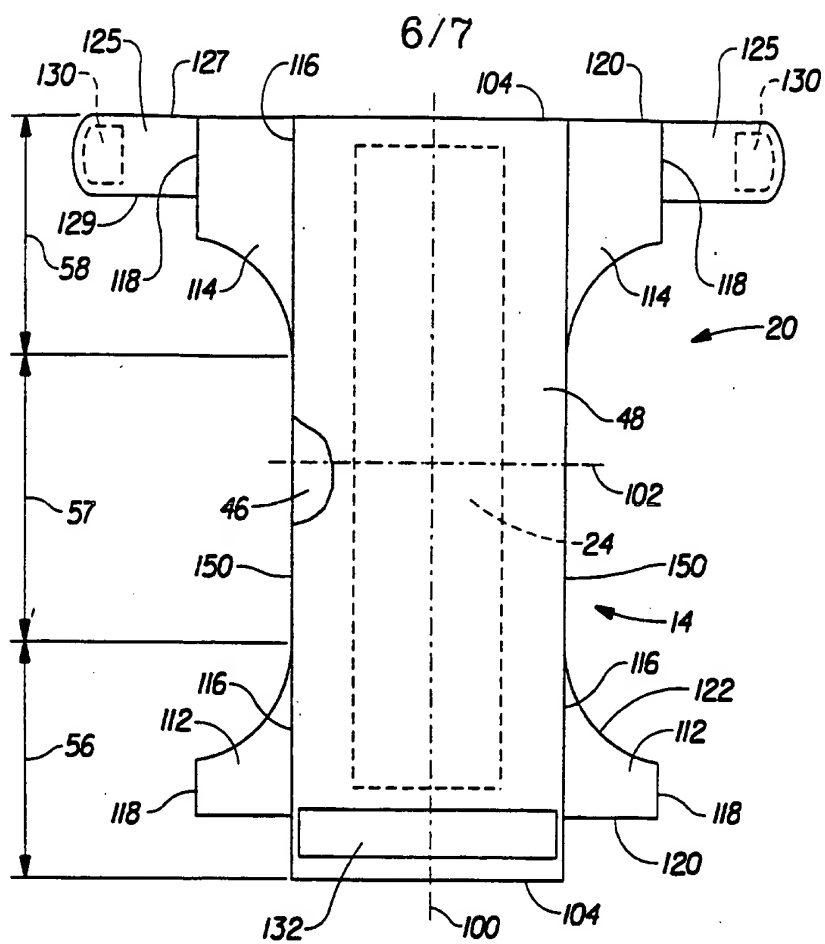


Fig. 10

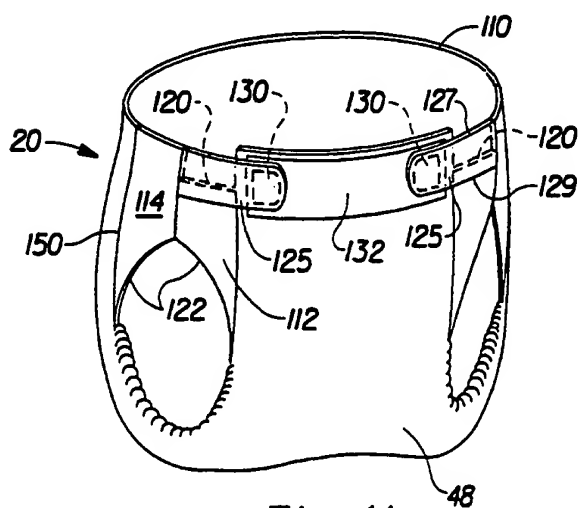


Fig. 11

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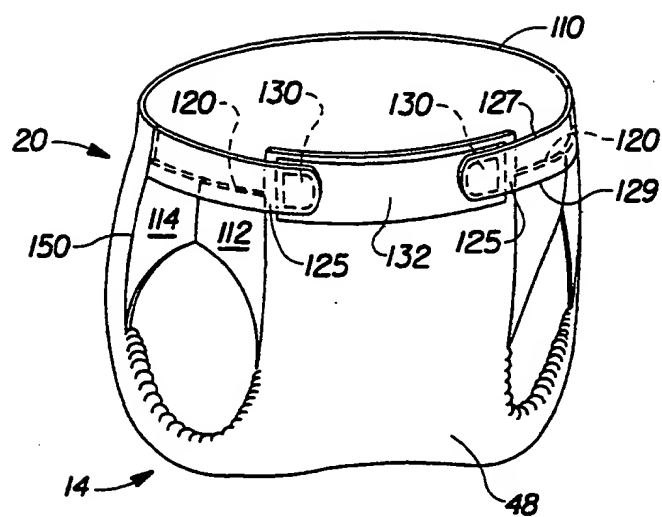


Fig. 12

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Inter- national Application No

PCT/US 95/05354

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC 6 A61F13/56 A61F13/15

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 6 A61F

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	EP,A,0 570 980 (UNI-CHARM CORPORATION) 24 November 1993 see column 4, line 44 - column 6, line 38; figures 1-8 ---	1
A	GB,A,2 244 422 (KAO CORPORATION) 4 December 1991 see page 14, paragraph 3 - page 20, paragraph 1; figures 6-8 ---	1
A	US,A,4 988 346 (J. L. PFEFFERKORN) 29 January 1991 see column 2, line 25 - column 3, line 45; figures 1-5 --- -/--	10

☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

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Date of the actual completion of the international search

31 August 1995

Date of mailing of the international search report

08.09.95

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No
PCT/US 95/05354

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International Application No
PCT/US 95/05354

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